



DECEMBER 2008

Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Drunk & Drugged Driving Awareness Month

According to USA Today, more than 1.5 million people were arrested in the United States last year for driving drunk and at least that many are estimated to have driven under the influence of drugs.

Drunk and drugged drivers continue to haunt our roads and highways causing more than 17,000 Americans to die each year; in 2003, 17,013 people died in an alcohol-related traffic crash. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, impaired driving will affect one in three Americans during their lifetimes.

In an effort to increase community awareness, December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month. First started in 1982 by President Ronald Reagan, this national holiday has experienced increased community support and continues to promote safer streets on a daily basis.

National Commission Against Drunk Driving Statistics

- 41 percent of all traffic crashes are alcohol-related.
- Nearly 600,000 Americans are injured in alcohol-related traffic crashes each year.
- Someone dies in an alcohol-related traffic crash every 30 minutes. Every two minutes someone is hurt (non-fatally injured) in an alcohol-related accident.
- Three out of every 10 Americans face the possibility of being directly involved in an alcohol-related traffic crash during their lifetime.

Source: Mary Whitmore from Good Shepherd Medical Center.

<http://yourhealth.goodshepherdhealth.org/HealthNews/drunkdriving.htm>

Coping With Holiday Stress

\$EASON'S GREEDINGS

A survey by Mental Health America reveals the most common stressors during the holidays:

1. Finances are the most common source of holiday stress (40%). Parents are more stressed than all other demographic groups by finances (51%), and females (45%) are more likely than men to feel stressed by finances.
2. 37 percent of Americans feel stressed by memories of a loved one who passed away.
3. Having too much to do causes stress for 34% of people during the holidays. Parents are more stressed than any other demographic group by too much to do (43%).

Tips to help minimize holiday stress

If you sometimes feel overwhelmed during the holidays, the following suggestions may help you:

To help minimize financial stress

Set a budget and keep it...Not just for gift giving, but the top-dollar amount you can afford to spend for everything including gifts, big family dinners, wrapping paper, decorations, parties, etc. Put your plan in writing and refer to it regularly to stay on track.

To help minimize emotional stress

Acknowledge your feelings...If you've recently had a loss in the family, if you are separated from your

children or loved ones, if you're suffering from a recent romantic break-up, realize that these can cause great feelings of loneliness and sadness.

It is okay now and then to take time just to cry or express your feelings. Recognize and accept that both positive and negative feelings may be experienced during the holidays and that this is NORMAL. If your feelings of stress or sadness are interfering with your relationships, family life or job performance, consider seeking the help of a mental health professional.

To help minimize physical stress

Keep holiday plans realistic...Simpler can be better and make for a happier and more relaxed holiday. Make a "To Do" list. Prioritize what has to be done. Delegate responsibility and/or divide holiday chores with other family members. Take care of yourself. Avoid overindulgence of holiday food, alcohol or caffeine. Be sure to get adequate sleep and rest and schedule some personal time to do things you enjoy.

HMS is here to help

If you or a dependent needs help, contact Human Management Services (HMS) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. Remember, HMS is always available to help you or your immediate family members with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. Why not call an HMS counselor today?

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186 www.hmsincorp.com

Deep Fryer or House Fire?

Play it safe when deep frying a holiday turkey.

The addictively tasty trend of deep frying your holiday turkey has been on the rise in the past few years. Unfortunately, house fires caused by fryer incidents are on the rise as well. Does this mean you should cool off your hot new recipe for deep fried turkey this holiday? Hardly. Simply be safe, take the proper precautions and your holiday meal will be the talk of the town for all the right reasons.



- Don't overfill your oil. Remember that when you place a large turkey into the fryer, the oil level will rise drastically. Before you heat up the fryer and the oil gets hot, try testing to see how much oil displacement your bird will actually cause.
- Watch tips and spills. Many fryers can tip over easily. Place the fryer on a flat, steady surface. NEVER have the fryer anywhere near playing children or activities that could cause a dangerous spill.
- Mind your surroundings. Don't set the fryer around flammable objects. Frying outside

is best – just don't operate the fryer on a wooden deck.

- Respect the fryer. A deep fryer gets extremely hot. Never touch the fryer with bare hands – use mitts when touching the lid or handles. Watch out for splatter – try long sleeves and goggles when tending your turkey to avoid dangerous contact with hot oil splatter.
- In the event of an emergency. Keep a fire extinguisher handy. Never use water to try to douse a grease fire! Call 9-1-1 immediately in the event of a large oil fire.
- Completely thaw your turkey. Even a partially frozen turkey will cause water to get into the oil. Oil and water don't mix! This may cause dangerous bubbling and oil to spill over.
- Use common sense. Take time to identify any danger factors in your setup. Make sure every person at your house also knows the dangers of the fryer. Remember that the oil will stay hot even for hours after cooking.

Keep these tips in mind and you're on your way to a safe, happy holiday treat. Bon appétit.

Making A Successful New Year's Resolution

According to a University of Washington survey, 63% of the people questioned were still keeping their number one New Year's resolution after two months. The keys to making a successful resolution? The researchers say a person's confidence that he or she can make the behavioral change and the commitment to making the change, are most important. In addition, the study indicates that successful resolutions are a process, not a one-time effort. Respondents to the survey reported that persistence can pay off. Of the people who successfully achieved their top resolution, only 40 percent of them did so on the first attempt. The rest made multiple tries, with 17 percent finally succeeding after more than six attempts.

Resolution mistakes

According to the University of Washington researchers, the following are sure-fire ingredients for resolution failure:

1. Not thinking about making a resolution(s) until the last minute.
2. Reacting on New Year's Eve and making your resolution(s) based on what's bothering you or what is on your mind at the time.
3. Framing your resolution(s) in absolute terms, such as "I will never do X again."

Tips for resolution success

The survey researchers offer the following tips to help you attain your New Year's resolutions:

1. Have a strong initial commitment to make a change.
2. Have coping strategies to deal with problems or obstacles that are sure to come up.
3. Keep track of your progress. The more monitoring you do and the more feedback you get, the better you'll do.

Take credit for success when you achieve a resolution, say the researchers, but it is a mistake to blame yourself if you fail. Instead, the researchers say, look at the barriers that were in your way. See how you can do better the next time and figure out a better plan to succeed. You do get to try again and can make behavior changes throughout the year, not only at New Year's.

HMS SERVICES

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186

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